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AAAS Statement on EPA Science Adviser Boards

The American Association for the Advancement of Science denounces the EPA administrator's decision to disallow qualified scientific experts from providing evidence-based information as members of its science adviser boards. This EPA decision is motivated by politics, not the desire for quality scientific information. Federal agencies should recognize and enable input of scientific and technical information that represents the best available evidence. The government must ensure that its science advisers possess the requisite scientific, medical and technical expertise to inform agency policies. At the same time, the government must facilitate transparency and protect against conflict of interest. Federal agencies from NIH to EPA have policies on scientific integrity and financial conflict of interest, allowing agencies to balance transparency and access to expertise.

Leading scientific experts who are conducting environmental science research should not be prohibited from participating on EPA science adviser boards and committees if they have met the appropriate financial conflict of interest policy. Science and the use of science in evidence-based policymaking cannot thrive when policymakers use politics as a pretext to attack scientific objectivity. Given its desire to limit expert perspectives and the role of scientific information, we question whether the EPA can continue to pursue its core mission to protect human health and the environment.

-- Rush Holt, chief executive officer, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)

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